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**2013 Arts Journal**



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# THE BELL TOWER ARTS JOURNAL

## VOLUME 7

### 2012 – 2013

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*Linda Gary, Ph. D.*

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The editorial board for the journal is comprised of full-time faculty members from the English Department, the Graphic Arts Department, and the Fine Arts Department. The editorial board has the final approval on all selections and publication decisions.

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## About the Title:

Just as the Bell Tower at Tyler Junior College chimes on the quarter hour to mark the passage of time, it reminds students of the harmony which surrounds them in their educational pursuits. Music, dance, theatre, art, athletics, and academics blend to make Tyler Junior College a beacon to the community, the state, and the world at large. As the echoes of the chords filter through the oaks, their vibrations tremble far beyond the confines of the brick archways and winding walks where students gather. Tyler Junior College is a lofty tower of educational opportunity for students who have come from all parts of the world. The Bell Tower Arts Journal proudly hails the accomplishments of its hallowed halls and beckons those who would seek both its traditions and the promise of tomorrow.

~Judith Bateman, 2006

## Editorial Policy:

*The Bell Tower Arts Journal* is sponsored by the Psi Gamma Chapter of Sigma Kappa Delta, the National English Honor Society. We accept submissions of poetry, short fiction, non-fiction essays, photography, and fine and graphic art by current Tyler Junior College students. We accept submissions for consideration only during the fall semester each year for possible publication in the subsequent spring semester. *The Bell Tower Arts Journal* is entirely student generated and seeks to provide a publishing venue for the rich artistic expression of TJC students.

Our goal is to create a publication that is a high quality, content-rich source of literary and artistic expression on a wide range of topics and themes. Therefore, we seek unique, insightful work displaying vivid, lively language and artistic skill.

All submissions must be the original work of the student writer or artist who submits it for consideration or publication. We do not accept previously published or plagiarized work. Every attempt is made by the editor to assure originality. All literary pieces will be submitted to turnitin.com for an originality report. However, it is ultimately the responsibility of each student to submit only his or her own literary and artistic work.

Moreover, while we strongly support intellectual freedom as the right of every individual from all points of view, we do not accept work deemed pornographic, profane, exploitative, or that seeks to cause injury to an individual or group.

Tyler Junior College gives equal consideration to all applicants for admission, employment and participation in its programs and activities without regard to race, creed, color, national origin, gender, age, marital status, disability or veteran status.

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# C O N T E N T S



## A NIGHTMARE IN DISGUISE

"Never sleep again, never sleep again." These are the words I would tell myself repeatedly after waking up from night terrors, or in other words, nightmares—nightmares that will haunt me till this very day.

I awaken in a vast room, bright-white walls, with no detail at all. The smell of burning wood fills the air. I look around for something, a way out, and there in the far distance is a door, a midnight-black door, with a crimson doorknob. I begin to run to it: my blood begins to race through my veins, and my heart is beating fast with anticipation of what could be on the other side. I stop at the door, reaching my hand to the knob, and my nerves begin to build like butterflies in the stomach before performing in a concert. The door slowly opens, creaking inch-by-inch. The smell of dead flesh fills the air, and there in front of me, only darkness exists with no visible way of knowing what's in front of me.

And there, my foot steps into the unknown blackness. The sound of my feet echoes throughout the desolate area. A flashlight appears in my hand, giving the relief of light out of all the chaos. The light flickers into an ominous fog with barely any visibility. I look around, curious of my surroundings, hoping for some salvation. Nothing—hours, it seems, go by. Then I smell something familiar, something oh-too-common. The smell fills my nose, guiding me to its source, and there in the distance is a figure—but not any figure I have seen before. It slowly glides its way towards me. I can't move as the figure gets closer, and it reveals itself more, and more. A devilish monster stands in front of me, black in stature, with a blood-red face and black-shot eyes that suck me in like a black hole; it has the horns of a mighty bull, fur like a bear, and hooves for feet. There I stand petrified: a sudden roar of evil brings me down to my knees. And there the glimmer of sharp metal is reflected in my eyes. I plead and cry for this to stop—to stop what it might do to me. The thought of everything ending flashes through my eyes.

A sharp pain races through my body. Looking down, I



realize that I have been stabbed. A black hand grabs the blade that drips with my blood and forces it into my abdomen, slowly ripping it through my chest and opening it up, showing my organs. The pain is unbearable. I try to scream but nothing comes out. I can't move for I am frozen in place. "Someone wake me up please!" I cry, but nothing happens. Quickly I gather the little endurance I have and limp away. There, the door appears, and I increase my speed. I have never been so happy in my life. I grab the crimson door knob and open door and close it. Gasping I collapse to the floor, my hands covered in blood. With a sigh of relief, I stand, turning around to find I'm not alone. Thousands upon thousands of shadows cover the room. No more is there white, but decayed walls that have the odor of dead flesh and death.

The crowd of demonie shadows soon begin to spread apart, and walking down the middle is my boogeyman, the one who stabbed me. He stands in front of me: I fall to my knees in prayer, hoping I will wake up. And there he places a crown of thorns on my head. "For now, no more shall he be your protector, for now will you live in the light, for now will you be pure, now you are mine." The deep voice rang through my ears, like a piercing siren during a tornado warning. The blood-covered blade rose against my face into the air. Then, suddenly, I awake from this nightmare screaming for help, covered in sweat, and with tears rolling down my face. I am terrified to go back to sleep.

These are the dreams that run through my mind repetitively like a movie. The images are so vivid and real that every night before sleeping I pray them away, the bad dreams. Every week the dream reappears, growing worse every time. It seems like even my own prayer doesn't fix it—maybe a pastor's or priest's will. But for now all I can do is pray and hope that they will soon end.

*Christopher Ivan Holiness / Tyler*





COMPOSITION  
Adam Mureiko / Kerens / Digital Photograph



## REALITY

Last night I took a journey to  
A place where I was free;  
I soared beyond the sinking sun  
In search of reverie.  
Night is a world, lost in time--  
She takes me by the hand,  
And soon after I'm lulled to sleep,  
I'm led into her land.  
But blinded by my inner peace,  
I'm duped, and so it seems  
That Night becomes my own captor--  
I, captive in my dreams.  
Kidnapped in her hypnotic clutch,  
Forever will I be,  
'Til Morning shows his shining face  
And wakes Reality.

Benjamin Fenton / Lindale



## ROUTINE SUCCESS

That time of night, once again  
Fourteen pills and insulin;  
An hour to wait, to feel the effects  
And hope that sleep I'll not reject.  
Legs still ache, a constant cramp,  
Hips, inside an unseen clamp,  
Awaken still, three or four times.  
Before, at dawn, the alarm chimes,  
Slow to rise and face the day,  
Shower, dress, and drive away;  
Wonder if I'm good enough  
To succeed at all the college stuff;  
A good example to show the teens  
What conquering adversity really means.  
I persevere and try my best;  
Self-doubt is still my biggest test.  
A cap and gown, I'll wear for sure  
To make my future more secure.  
For my daughter, my husband, and for me,  
Success is my new routine.

*Julie Speaks / Sunnyvale, CA*





**SILVER SYMPHONY**  
Jennifer Hurbrough/ Palestine / Collage





## TWEED JACKET

Clara Hicks / Tyler / Hand-woven Fiber Arts





## ANGEL

Jonathan DeLeon / Bryan / Digital Photograph



## THE RITE OF MANHOOD

As I peered through the pitch darkness, I could faintly make out the small silhouette of the cholla cactus that lay shortly ahead. The chill of the frigid December air cut straight through me, almost as if it were a frosted steel blade. The scent of the dusty, West Texas plains filled the air, and the song of an early morning dove rang out from a nearby mesquite tree.

With my rifle in hand, I inched closer and closer to my destination, trying not to disturb the fragile ecosystem that I was so rudely intruding on. After walking for what seemed like hours, but realistically was probably about twenty or so minutes, I found myself towered over by the long, sleek deer stand where I would spend the rest of my morning.

As I was climbing up, trying not to miss a step, I opened the door ever so slowly, stealthily stepped in, and opened all the windows, granting myself as much accessibility as I could, then finally sat down only to be greeted by the bone-chilling coldness. While I sat, the persistent thought of trying to keep warm played in my head while all I could do was wait patiently for the sun to kiss the horizon.

There was nothing around me but my thoughts: I was in complete and utter isolation. The one memory that stood out to me was my father explaining the power of life and death, and at this time, I understood that I had that power sitting in the palm of my hand. I had the choice to take a life or spare one, but I knew the decision would be easy at the first sight of my prey.

When the smallest sliver of sunlight peeked its way over the hills, life began to breathe. The squirrels seemed to dance, the birds sang, yet the lonely coyote belled its howl of sorrow. A new perspective had come about, and the lonely, cold isolation began to dissipate with the darkness.



Just then a commotion came from the thick undergrowth, and a sense of havoc shrieked out from the smaller animals, and in that single instant...I knew. He took one step into the coarse, jagged opening of the meadow, just within a stone's throw away from where I was hiding, to be sure of his surroundings. With his long, slender face, he threw his head up exalting his trophy antlers that perched proudly upon his brow while stomping the ground fiercely to claim his domain.

Trembling with both exhilaration and anticipation, I raised my rifle. My heart beat like a thousand drums in a war dance, and my stomach had now entered my throat. The decision of life and death played in my mind once again as my finger reached its way towards the trigger. Everything had now gone into a deep silence, and the world seemed to stop. All I had my eye on was this vibrant creature that had moved into my crosshairs.

I squeezed the trigger slowly until the gun went off, and with a hard jolt to my shoulder, the realization of reality came back to my senses. A few seconds passed, and finally it all settled in. I gazed out the window to find a white belly and an antler positioned just barely above the grass. Overcome and overjoyed, I silently kept reminding myself that I, by myself, had taken my first deer. The comprehension of the responsibility I bore that day had impressed deep standards of values onto my way of life. In the short ten years of my childhood, I had never felt more grown.

The sun had just peaked with its full potential in the sky, which now illuminated every shadow. I felt the bitter chill begin to thaw, and the quiet murmur of a mockingbird replaced the mellow song of the early morning dove. The taste of triumph was sweet to the senses as I now stood ten-feet tall.

*Austin Wallace / Chapel Hill*





## ACCORDING TO YOU

Blair Russell / Marysville, KS / Digital Photography



## FRIEND

In the corner of a room,  
Beneath a collection of old toys  
Sits a brown bear with matted fur.

His eyes have lost their shine,  
His stuffing, its fluffiness,  
His "newness" long faded.

All these things he gave to the girl;  
The girl who would rub her nose  
Against the velvet of his own.

Now a tattered bow wraps his neck,  
His soft nose now smooth,  
His belly a pomegranate stain.

He used to go everywhere with her,  
Like the fin never leaves the side of a fish  
Now he watches from the corner of a room.

Cassie Lynn Pickle / Canton



## captivity

smothered

mothered

mother

moth

mouthless

drowning in outstretched arms  
gasping for air  
grasping for freedom

mommy! mommy! mommy!  
a life snuffed by duty

on the chaise  
marinating in guilt  
love us! feed us! guide us! mold us!

but HOW?

me. life. out of order.  
life out of order.

my treasures: my heart

why me? ME? me.

brief moments of temporary sanity  
clarity

the injustice: born to self after thirty years of decay

luna moth trapped in cocoon  
suffocated by expectation  
paralyzed by this role



I can't breathe  
choked by the dense smoke of obligation

I grip my throat  
I tear away the silken restraints

careful

not to nick the glittering jugular

that which encases the crimson life

if it spills in gushing waves  
will I gather it back in desperation

r e g r e t

or will this be free

will this be

me?

*-Mariah Sanders / Whitehouse*



## BRIDGES OF MS

*Joseph Hayes / Whitehouse / Digital Photograph*



## TOWER-SONG:

And when the sand is spent,  
The hourglass repents  
The tears of lonely eyes  
That gaze on paradise.

Will whisper in your ear,  
“Shhh, all is well, my dear.  
You built this tower-song  
With bricks of power strong.

Now you have reached the end.”  
You turn towards your friend;  
Thus, what began as dust  
You have grown to trust.

You slowly speak to her,  
“Look what, together,  
We have built.”

Hannah Lynn Root / Tyler





UNTITLED  
Haley Oakes / Tyler / Acrylic





## WIND

Amanda Hatfield/ Lindale / Watercolor and Pencils



## THE WAY MY MIND WORKS

O how difficult it is for me to put words on this paper;  
For writing is not the best of me.  
When told to write a paper, anxiety comes upon me:  
Time, grammar, spelling, what kind,  
and how long will it be;  
It's a hard-core exercise that makes me  
sweat my brains away.

The constant, chaotic, confusing work  
out of brainstormed ideas  
Burn away the calories of an overweight paper.  
There are too many ideas in my head:  
They're put in here because  
Their sounds all jump around in my mind.

O how I wish that I could just open the top of my head,  
Like an empty drawer, have all the  
info dump in and magically  
Write like Edgar Allen Poe.  
But that's not going to happen to me:  
I have to be realistic: I'm going to have to learn it.

One-on-one with a trainer, I will meet my goal:  
I will whittle down my paragraphs  
until they're slim and trim  
With the perfectly-toned body, I will meet the end.  
The cool-down conclusion is waiting in my pen  
To come out and be evaluated.  
O, how nerve-racking that can be.

Sara Muñoz/ Tyler





**KURT COBAIN**  
Robert DeSanchez / Tyler / Charcoal





## ON EDGE

Kailan Counahan / Rusk / Digital Photograph





TJC ART DEPARTMENT WALL  
Naomi Powell / Tyler / Digital Photograph



## THREE-SIXTY

From the flip-side out of nothingness,  
A sudden stop, a dare to explode  
The seas overflow with emptiness,  
Reality speeds swiftly down the road.

Wild beasts cower and hide in weakness;  
Cries of children eall the night to war;  
As violent silence grips the stillness,  
Reality catches the air, to soar.

Time sitting still, dangling its feet  
As preachers drown their own lives in sin;  
Powerful demons pray for retreat;  
Reality's three-sixty throws its spin.

Chinks in the mirror remain unseen;  
Bridges crumble and fall from the sky;  
An hour once known that's now reflected;  
Reality shrugs and moves right on by.

Celebrations of death and disease;  
Paper or plastic in place of gold;  
Lustful thoughts in virgin memories  
Back into nothing, reality's rolled.

Lloyd G. Morey II / Mesa, AZ





## HIDDEN BEAUTY

Michelle Auvenshine / Elysian Fields / Digital Photograph





## BOX EYES

Samantha Schalik / Tyler / Digital Photograph



## WEATHER OR KNOT

Faces all around me  
In telephone poles, in trees,  
Stretched over the horizon  
To laugh at me through the breeze.  
Howling wind, teardrops fall,  
The sky cries out its warning:  
A thunderous taunt to move,  
I won't go till it's storming.

Not much time to loaf around;  
Need to do it when I can;  
I shouldn't have to budge  
Or get on my feet and stand--  
Not until I'm ready  
To face-off instead of hide;  
Cacophony looming,  
Knots up everything inside.

The leaves shake even more:  
Whispers blow through their branches,  
Giving me one last chance  
Before rain heaves down punches.  
So when I'm soaking wet,  
Still in this hammock swinging,  
Not a dry bone on me;  
Just know inside I'm singing.

Lloyd G. Morey II / Mesa, AZ

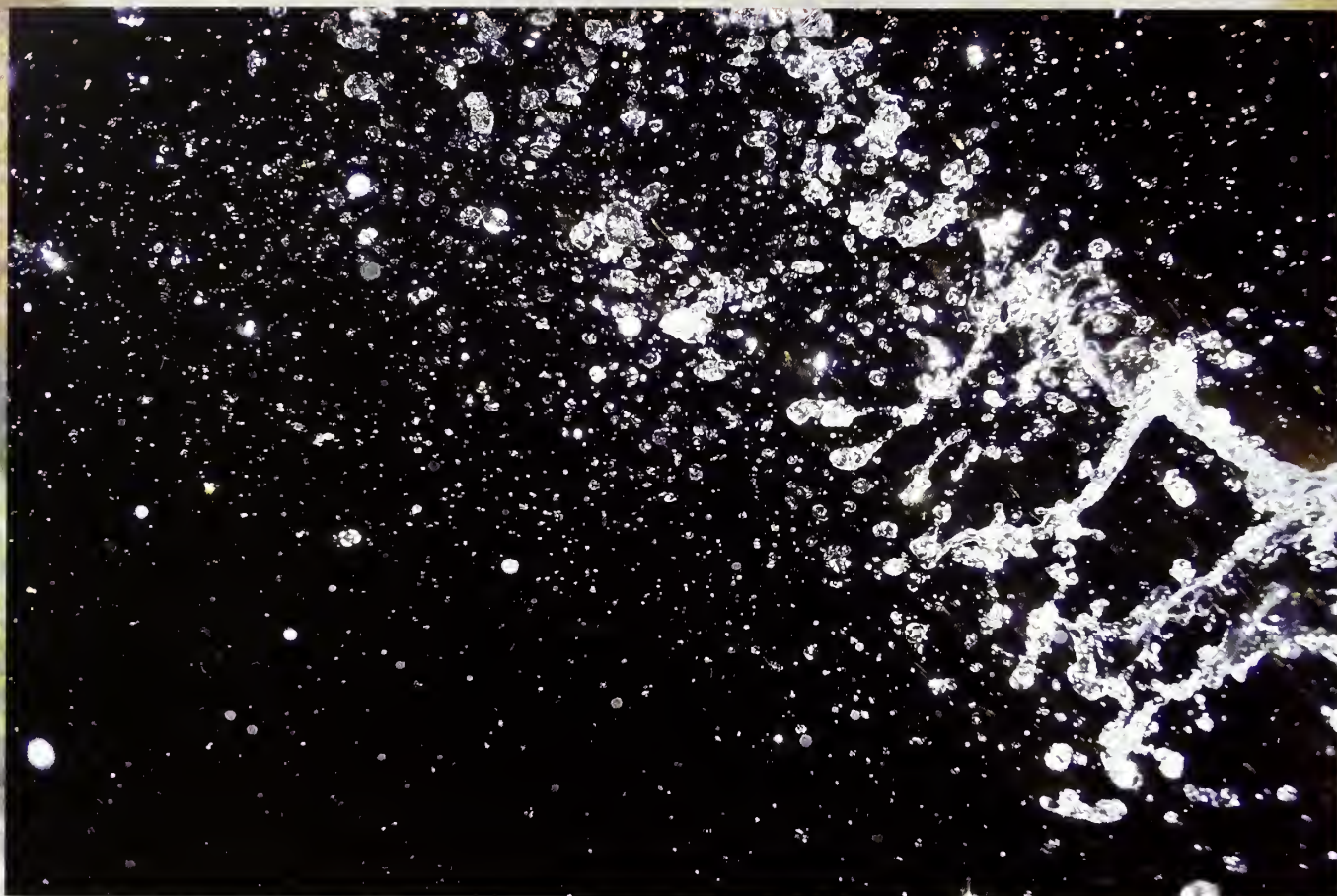




## AUTUMN BLEND

Shannon Rooney / Tyler / Acrylic on Canvas





## WATER SPRAY

Jessica Easley / Lindale / Digital Photograph

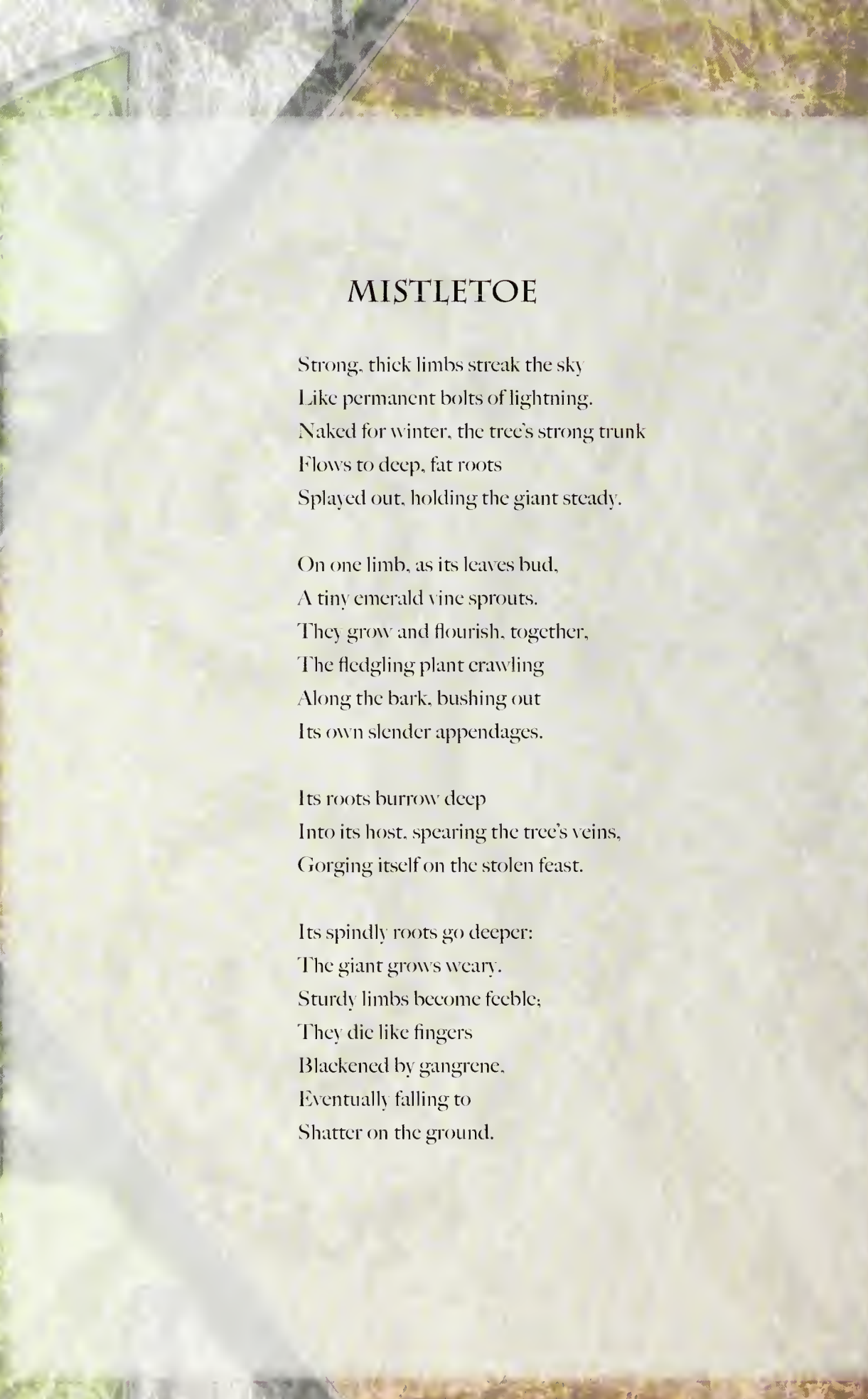




## ANT HILL

William Tauber / Murchison / Mixed Media





## MISTLETOE

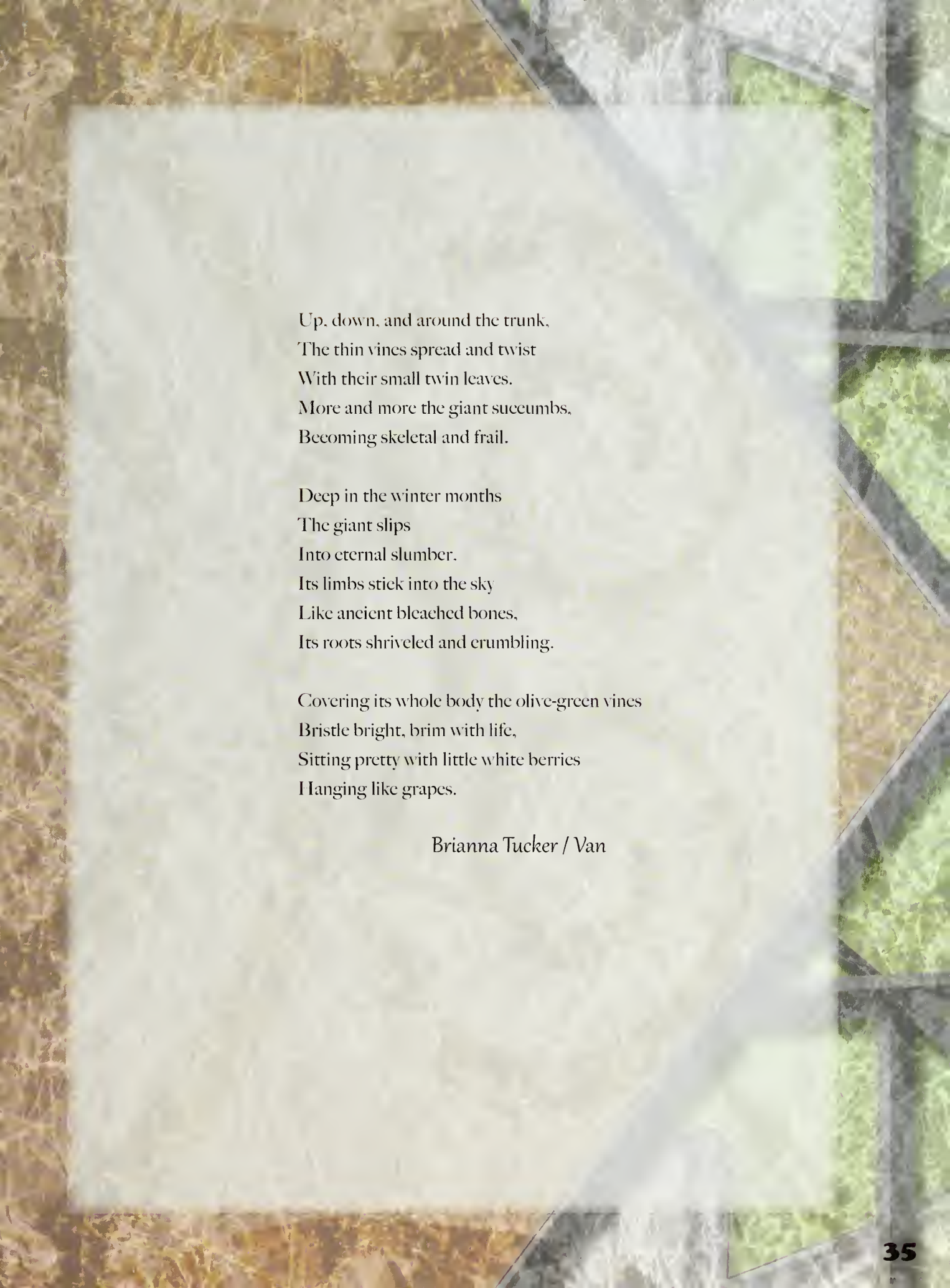
Strong, thick limbs streak the sky  
Like permanent bolts of lightning.  
Naked for winter, the tree's strong trunk  
Flows to deep, fat roots  
Splayed out, holding the giant steady.

On one limb, as its leaves bud,  
A tiny emerald vine sprouts.  
They grow and flourish, together,  
The fledgling plant crawling  
Along the bark, bushing out  
Its own slender appendages.

Its roots burrow deep  
Into its host, spearing the tree's veins,  
Gorging itself on the stolen feast.

Its spindly roots go deeper:  
The giant grows weary.  
Sturdy limbs become feeble;  
They die like fingers  
Blackened by gangrene.  
Eventually falling to  
Shatter on the ground.





Up, down, and around the trunk,  
The thin vines spread and twist  
With their small twin leaves.  
More and more the giant succumbs,  
Becoming skeletal and frail.

Deep in the winter months  
The giant slips  
Into eternal slumber.  
Its limbs stick into the sky  
Like ancient bleached bones,  
Its roots shriveled and crumbling.

Covering its whole body the olive-green vines  
Bristle bright, brim with life,  
Sitting pretty with little white berries  
Hanging like grapes.

Brianna Tucker / Van





**EYE OF ENLIGHTENMENT**  
Karla Holley / Tyler / Acrylic and Sharpie





COYOTE MEDICINE  
Shaina English / Quitman/Acrylic



## PARANORMAL PHENOMENA

Phantoms and shadows shift through cloudy skies,  
Help give lift to butterflies' and birds' wings;  
The shriek of the banshee, some wails, some cries  
At sea full sails are pulled taut by their strings.  
Campfire's smoky ghouls dance down by the shore;  
Rolling rivers teem to carve through mountains;  
Whistles in cracks of the floor, through the door  
Ghosts frolic amidst fancy lace curtains.  
Cherry blossom blizzard through the open  
Windows to the soul becomes dried and red,  
Seeing spirits and speeters, delusion  
Creeps 'round caverns and corners of your head.  
Madness fills in the gaps and what you find  
Is after all nothing more than the wind.

Lloyd G. Morey II / Mesa, AZ





**LADIES PONCHO - FIESTA**  
Midge Jackson / Tyler / Hand-woven Fiber Arts





## COUSINS

Rene Comer / Lindale / Digital Photograph



## EVERYDAY BLESSINGS

Dear God in Heaven,  
We give you thanks today  
For the blessings we overlook  
Every single day.

A comforting smile,  
Perhaps a friendly hello  
That makes things much brighter  
As through my day we go.

A little joke  
And a happy laugh  
That makes the day much smoother  
As we travel its bumpy path.

A child's look of wonder  
While he's hard at play,  
And so fast a-growing  
We overlook each day.

The flowers, grass, and trees,  
And all of nature so grand,  
Made so fine and lovely  
With your kind and loving hand.

So, Father, please forgive us:  
We are only mortal men,  
And we will try not to overlook  
The little blessings you daily send.

Perry "Joe" Coulter / Tyler



## SILENCE

Clang, bang, the sound of a tray falling to a floor:

Shiny metal instruments all gone askew.

This the first noise brought to

my tender newborn ears:

To me this noise was the world anew;

My mother holding me close

I hear her heart, calming, serene, and then

Clang, bang, the door bursts open

and people file in with their noise:

Funny faces, happy faces with loud sounds.

Some want to hold me, wait I am afraid;

The fears and noise in my head compound;

Mommy sees me and takes me in.

I relax against her, peaceful when

Clang, bang, people dressed in white come in

With lights and sticks to poke and prod;

They take sharp things and poke me causing me pain.

I scream for help and they watch like that is odd;

She takes me at last and peace once more and then

Clang, bang, doors opening

and packing noise as we are leaving,

Going to my new home today.

Riding in the car wind on my face tickles;

I honks and screeches fill my brain

drawing me into the fray.

We arrive and my mother takes me in.

We sit down to rest, my eyes getting heavy and



Clang, bang, the bus arrives:  
It is here to take me from home.  
To school we go with all of the new, strange kids.  
They are picking, poking,  
filling my mind with their drone;  
The teacher arrives all gets quiet then suddenly

Clang, bang, the alarm bell rings taking away the quiet:  
Through the years it goes on and on,  
Mind filled with the noise of life.  
The noise piles up, married now,  
three now four fill our home:  
I find no peace try to rest, but NO,

Clang, bang, the boss slams the door:  
Taking in all of the screaming, yearning for quiet.  
The years roll by five, ten, then more;  
Every single day a battle, either fight or flight.  
Responsibility becomes a load heavy to maintain,  
growing weary and then

Clang, bang, the car strikes the curb:  
Body mangled getting harder to think  
and harder to breathe.  
It must be getting close, soon time to move on:  
The noise grows quieter as it nears time to leave.  
I feel peace coming, no more worries to bear  
and I think one last time

No more clang, bang, it is all gone now,  
All the ones who made the noise



moving on with their lives.  
I am finally free no more noise torments me;  
They still have the noise they still have their fight.  
One final thought, one final choice—if You would,  
Lord God, please, oh please

Send me back in and  
**BRING BACK THE NOISE!**

*Perry “Joe” Coulter / Tyler*



## **GOD'S NATURE**

*Joseph Hayes / Whitehouse / Digital Photograph*





## EUPHORIC

Christopher Umierski / Brownsville / Acrylic Spray Paint



## THE MISSING PEACE

The grass tries to go on forever  
But keeps hitting the trees.  
It tries to dance but its stems are too short.  
Blades dance down my side, begging for attention  
As blunt teeth pull them from their roots.

The trees reach upwards beyond their means  
Toward the sun that blackens their limbs.  
They get too tall, too hollow, and fall.

Above and to the side of me,  
The horse continues to eat, barely moving,  
Content in these few acres of life  
Or perhaps reaching as I turn away.  
Maybe it has already fallen.

I realize there is a world happening  
If I just take that second to glance up.  
But my gaze is focused only on the ground.  
On the pieces of a dozen broken bottles.

I play with them, parts of many wholes:  
Clinking together, sparkling together,  
Trying so hard but not quite fitting,  
Scratching at each other in frustration.

Maybe everything wishes to be great,  
To reach towards the feeling of certain things--  
Like sunsets and waterfalls.



Mountains and redwood trees.  
Maybe they just want to be whole.

I don't find anything today.  
I trail my fingers down the horse's side,  
Amidst grass that dreams of no trees,  
Heading towards home.

Brianna Tucker / Van



## POLLEN

Adam Mureiko / Kerens / Digital Photograph

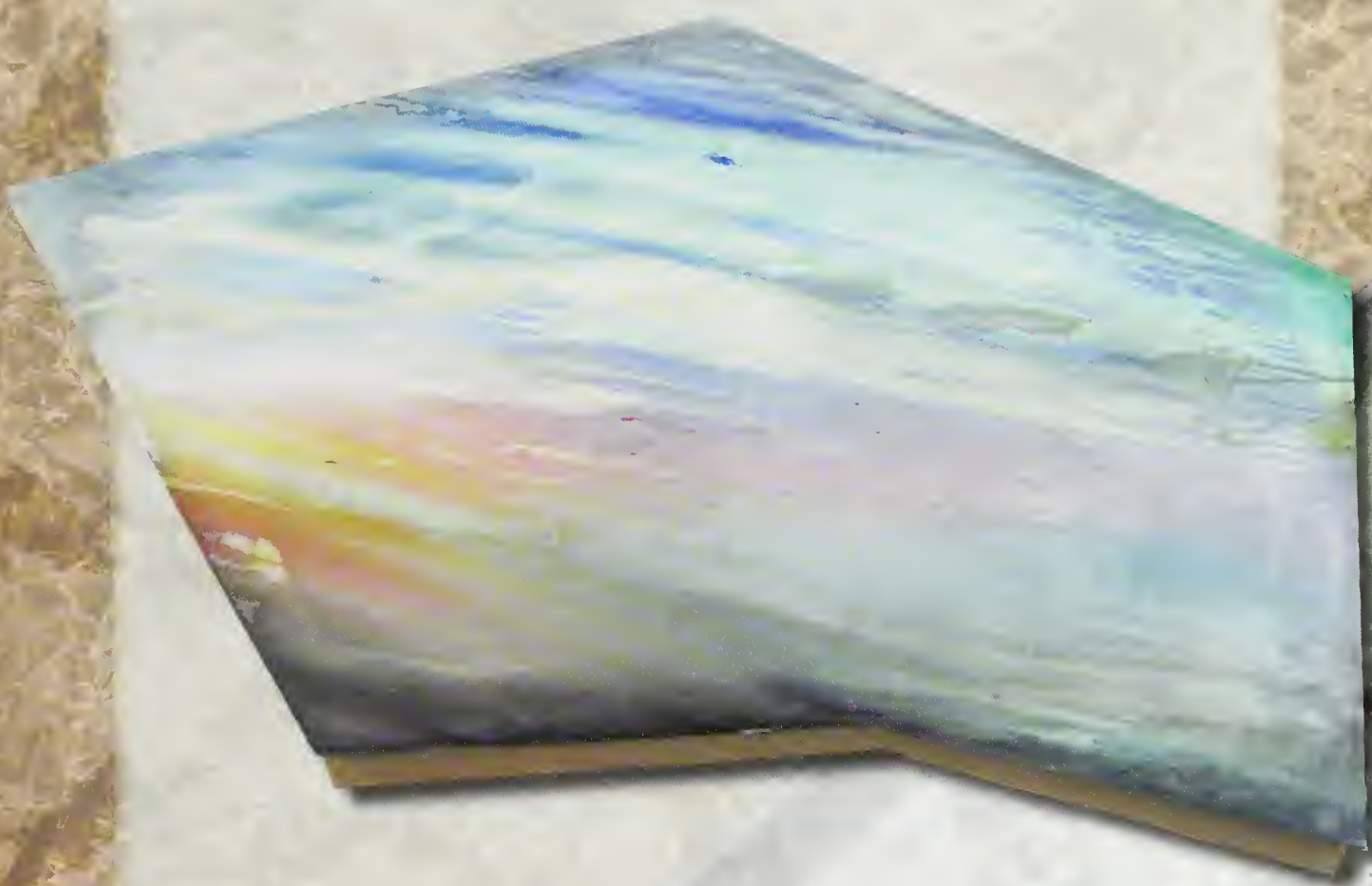




## UNTITLED

Chara "Joy" Malone/ Lindale / Acrylic on Canvas





## HAVEN

Joseph Haddad/ Jacksonville / Watercolor on Canvas



## GOOD-BYE

Mom's tears on my cheek,  
An extra second in dad's arms,  
Suitcase hangs from my shoulder,  
My keys in hand.

As I walk to the door, I see  
The piano, hours of practice,  
Shelves of books, evenings listening to Mom read,  
Dining table, evenings of dinner together.

It's time to leave, before the sun sets;  
As I drive away, I reach my hand towards Mom;  
Dad takes a picture, capturing  
Two hands saying "always in your heart."

Just as nothing can stop the wind from blowing,  
Nothing I can do to delay leaving;  
They say only a phone call away,  
But comfort's embrace can't be sent by telephone wires.

I can see only a mile of road ahead,  
But I have traveled:  
Around the bend I see  
A rainbow painted in the sky.

Cassie Lynn Pickle / Canton





CLASH OF THE SEASONS

Daniel Haddad / Mexico City / Acrylic





## CIRCLE

Alyssa Doria / Carthage / Digital Photograph





## SUNBEAM

Arriss Woodard-Collins / Dallas / Digital Photograph





**ROCK ON!**  
Robert DeSanchez / Tyler / Charcoal





**THE HUMAN CANVAS**  
Courtney Howland/ Arlington / Magazine Paper





This issue of *The Bell Tower* is dedicated to Sarah Herrin Harrison, the Chair of the English Department at Tyler Junior College and an unfailing supporter of the publication. Since the inception of *The Bell Tower*, Ms. Harrison has supported the accomplishments of students whose literary and artistic endeavors reflect the highest standards of the College. During her thirty-seven-year tenure at TJC, Ms. Harrison has exhibited those same high standards. All those involved in the 2013 issue of *The Bell Tower* salute Ms. Harrison's many years at TJC and offer her our most sincere appreciation and gratitude. May her years after Tyler Junior College be blessed with deserved happiness and fulfillment.







